

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102(a) as being anticipated by Watanabe et al. (WO 02/090649). U.S. Patent 7,097,749B2 is the U.S. counterpart to the PCT Publication.

In his rejection of the claims over Watanabe, the Examiner states the Applicant cannot rely upon the foreign priority papers to overcome this rejection because a translation of the priority document has not been made of record in accordance with 37 CFR 1.55. The Examiner is advised that the Applicant intends to file a certified English translation of the priority document in due course if necessary, thereby eliminating Watanabe as an effective reference.

Claims 1-3 and 5 stand rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Matsuchezky, U.S. Patent 6,030,503. Also, claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Steiner et al. (DE 4,401,580). Finally, claims 1, 2 and 5 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Yokoo et al. (JP 8-13373). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

The present invention is directed to a shoe press belt and a shoe press employing the same, wherein the shoe press belt contains a number of different configurations as set forth in Figs. 1-5 of the present application, for effectively and uniformly dehydrating the overall web, whereby paper products can be prevented from exhibiting a reduction of the yield resulting from web break or the like and the quality of the paper products themselves can be improved.

The shoe press belt disclosed in Figs. 2, 4, 8 and 9 of Watanabe has drains whose depths are substantially constant in the pressurizing region and are changed only at the edge portions. On the other hand, the shoe press belt as defined by claim 1 of the present application contains drains whose depths are gradually increased from the central pressurizing portion toward the end pressurizing portions in the pressurizing region. Therefore, the shoe press belt as defined by claim 1 of the present application is substantially different from that of Watanabe.

The press sleeve disclosed in Matuschczyk has grooves 4 in the pressurizing region and holes 3 in the edge portions of the press sleeve. The press sleeve of Matuschczyk, however, also has grooves 4 whose depths are substantially constant in the pressurizing region. Therefore, the shoe press belt of the present invention is substantially different from the press sleeve of Matuschczyk.

The shoe press belt disclosed in Steiner also has drains with depths that are substantially constant in the pressurizing region and are only changed in the edge portions. Therefore, the shoe press belt in accordance with the present invention is substantially different from the shoe press belt of Steiner.

The shoe press belt disclosed in Yokoo has drains which are formed in the direction of Θ (shown in Fig. 1) equal to 15° to about 75° (please see paragraph [0016] of Yokoo). In contradistinction thereto, the drains of the shoe press belt of the present invention are formed along the peripheral direction of the shoe press belt. Therefore, the shoe press belt of the present invention is substantially different from the press sleeve of Yokoo. Thus, according to the present invention, it has been determined that pressure applied to the end pressurizing portions A_1 and A_1' of the shoe press belt 11 is higher than that applied to the central pressurizing portion C_1 , and it has also been determined that a shoe press is not reduced in dehydration ability in the vicinity of the aforementioned end pressurizing portions but can uniformly dehydrate the overall wet web when the depths of the drains 15 are progressively increased from the central pressurizing portion C_1 toward the end pressurizing portions A_1 and A_1' , even if the shoe press belt 11 is worn in the vicinity of the aforementioned end pressurizing portions. Thus, the Applicant has provided an inventive contribution which has not been recognized by any of the references relied upon the Examiner, either alone or in combination. Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims in the present application are respectfully requested.

Application No. 10/510,484
Amendment dated July 30, 2007
Reply to Office Action of January 30, 2007

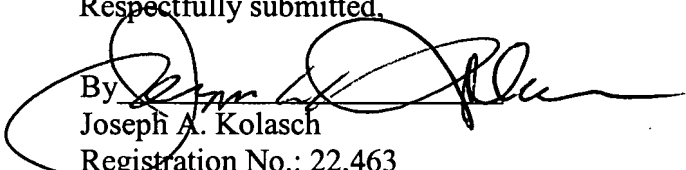
Docket No.: 0033-0955PUS1

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Joseph A. Kolasch Reg. No. 22,463 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: July 30, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

By 
Joseph A. Kolasch
Registration No.: 22,463

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP
8110 Gatehouse Road
Suite 100 East
P.O. Box 747
Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000
Attorney for Applicant